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House Members Curb 'Intervention' Criticism

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WASHINGTON

A hint from Speaker Rayburn was all the House needed to stay practically speechless about the Middle East crisis and the sending of United States Marines to Lebanon.

Unlike numerous lengthy observations by Senators, only three brief references to the explosive "Mid-east" situation were made on the House floor last week. Even in the Congressional Record appendix fewer than a dozen House members inserted remarks on the subject. These were reprints of newspaper editorials.

Mr. Rayburn has not could not and would not put a curb on all expression of opinion by House members. He nevertheless made clear two instances during House sessions and reportedly in private conversations that he does not want controversial floor discussion of the administration's action until the over-all matter becomes considerably clearer.

Decries Criticism

He let it be known, although not for publication in the Record earlier in the week, that he would not encourage members to criticize the President on this point. This was after Representative Reuss, Democrat of Wisconsin, complained in a one-minute speech last Tuesday that Mr. Eisenhower did not consult Congress as a whole before sending troops to the Mid-east.

Mr. Rayburn did not take issue with the Wisconsin member's statement, but he obviously frowned on its controversial feature. A short time previously in the same session

he refrained from commenting on a similar one-minute speech by Representative Sikes, Democrat of Florida, commending the President.

The Speaker made his position clearer the next day. When Representative Celler, Democrat of New York, sought recognition, Mr. Rayburn announced for the record: "The chair is not going to recognize members to talk about foreign affairs in this critical situation."

Comments in Newsletter

Mr. Celler explained that he intended to praise, not attack, the President. He then was recognized and made a brief

statement. Since that time, no member has asked or received recognition for that purpose.

Moreover, only one House bill has been introduced since last Monday bearing in any way on international relations. Representative Feighan, Democrat of Ohio, submitted a resolution stating "the sense of Congress that Soviet Ambassador Menshikov has violated the prescribed norms of diplomatic conduct by engaging in a long series of deliberate acts of propaganda against the United States. The resolution, referred to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, asks that President Eisenhower declare Mr. Menshikov persona non grata."

Long before the upheaval in Iraq, Mr. Feighan had planned to introduce that resolution.

In newsletters mailed to their constituents, several House members yesterday called attention to the gravity of the

Mid-east problem and the difficult decisions confronting the United Nations. Most of those letters were reportorial rather than commentary.

Would-be one-minute speakers may continue to get an icy glare this week. But House self-restraint and the power of suggestion of the Speaker could crack a bit under the strain during scheduled general debate on at least four important bills.

Those measures offering opportunity for oratory on foreign policy considerations are the military construction funds bill, to be reported out by the House Appropriations Committee for floor action Thursday; in Iraq, Mr. Feighan had a \$3.2 billion supplementary appropriations bill already programmed for Tuesday, and resolutions setting up a permanent Committee on Science and Aeronautics and authorizing additional research facilities

for the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics.

Up to now, so far as the official record shows, hardly a crisis is stirring outside of the significantly quiet House.